

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (currently amended) A method for delivering goods ordered by a plurality of customers, comprising the steps of:

a plurality of customers placing orders for multiple goods from a vendor maintaining a server on a network; and

for each of the multiple goods in an order placed by a given customer, the vendor server determining whether the good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the given customer, and [[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, the vendor server ear-marking that good for the given customer, and

(ii) in a case where the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, the vendor server fulfilling the order of the given customer by causing the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point in a single shipping order in combination with goods ordered by others from among the plurality of customers who are also geographically close to the local pick-up point.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the goods are ordered via the Internet.

3. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising notifying the given customer when the order is available for pick-up.

4. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the vendor from the local pick-up point.

5. (currently amended) A method for designating local receipt of items ordered from a vendor at a remote location, comprising the steps of:

the customer placing an order for multiple items via a sever maintained by a vendor on a network;

the customer providing to the vendor the customer's location via the vendor server;

the customer choosing a local pick-up point from among local pick-up points offered by the vendor;

for each of the multiple items, the vendor server determining whether the item is currently available at the chosen local pick-up point, and [[for]] treating each such item separately depending on whether the item is currently available at the chosen local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the item is currently available at the chosen local pick-up point, the vendor server ear-marking that item for the customer, and

(ii) in a case where the item is not currently available at the chosen local pick-up point, the vendor server fulfilling the order by causing the item to be shipped to the chosen local pick-up point; and

upon receipt of the multiple items at the local pick-up point, the customer receiving notification that the order is available for pick-up.

6. (original) A method according to Claim 5, wherein the designation is done via the Internet.

7. (original) A method according to Claim 5, further comprising a step of the customer or customer's agent retrieving a collection of goods from the vendor from the local pick-up point.

8. (original) A method according to Claim 5, further comprising:
the customer selecting from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

9. (currently amended) A method for delivering goods ordered by a plurality of customers, comprising the steps of:

a plurality of customers placing orders for multiple goods from a plurality of vendors via servers maintained by the vendors on a network;

for each of the multiple goods in an order placed by a given customer, each vendor fulfilling the order by determining via the respective vendor server if the good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the given customer, and, [[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, the respective vendor server ear-marking that good for the given customer, and

(ii) in a case where the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, causing the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point in a single shipping order in combination with goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points.

10. (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from one or more of the plurality of vendors from the local pick-up point.

11. (original) A method according to Claim 9, wherein the orders are placed via the Internet.

12. (original) A method according to Claim 9, further comprising:
the customer selecting from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling delivery of goods to a plurality of customers, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving orders for multiple goods from a plurality of customers;

means for determining, for each of the multiple goods, whether the good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to an ordering customer, and [[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, ear-marking that good for the ordering customer, and

(ii) in a case where the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, fulfilling the ordering customer's order by causing the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point in a shipping order in combination with goods ordered

by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points.

14. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the orders are received via the Internet.

15. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

16. (original) An apparatus according to Claim 13, further including:
means operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

17. (currently amended) A system, having multiple vendors, for allowing the multiple vendors to consolidate shipping of goods to customers, each vendor having an apparatus comprising:

means for receiving orders for multiple goods from a plurality of customers;

means for determining, for each of the multiple goods, whether the good is currently available at local pick-up points geographically close to ordering customers, and ~~[[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, as follows:~~

(i) in those cases where the good is currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, ear-marking that good for the ordering customer, and

(ii) in those cases where the good is not currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, fulfilling the customer's order by causing the good to be shipped to a geographically close local pick-up point in an individual shipping order in combination with goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points.

18. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein the multiple vendors' apparatuses are connected on a network.

19. (original) A system according to Claim 18, wherein the network is the Internet.

20. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the respective local pick-up point.

21. (original) A system according to Claim 17, wherein each vendor's apparatus further comprises:

means operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

22. (currently amended) A shopping server on a network including a plurality of vendor servers and a plurality of customer client terminals, the shopping server being operable to:

receive orders from a customer terminal for purchase of multiple goods;

for each of the multiple goods, communicate with one of a plurality of local pick-up points in proximity to the customer who ordered the good, to determine if the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, and, [[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) if the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, communicate with one of the vendor servers to ear-mark that good for the customer who ordered the good, and

(ii) if the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, communicate with one of the vendor servers to cause the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point.

23. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein the network is the Internet.

24. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

25. (original) A shopping server according to Claim 22, wherein the server is further operable to:

allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

26. (currently amended) A system, having multiple vendors, for allowing the multiple vendors to consolidate shipping of goods to fulfill customer orders received over a network, each vendor having a network server operable to:

receive orders for multiple goods from a plurality of customers;

determine, for each of the multiple goods, whether the good is currently available at local pick-up points geographically close to ordering customers, and ~~[[for]]~~ treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, as follows:

(i) in those cases where the good is currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, ear-marking that good for the ordering customer, and

(ii) fulfil the customers' orders by, in those cases where the good is not currently available at geographically close local pick-up points, causing the good to be shipped to a geographically close local pick-up point in an individual shipping order in combination with goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points.

27. (original) A system according to Claim 26, wherein the network is the Internet.

28. (original) A system according to Claim 26, the network server being further operable to:

coordinate with the multiple vendors so as to arrange for shared shipping of ordered goods when respective ones from among the multiple vendors have received orders to be sent to the identical local pick-up points.

29. (original) A system according to Claim 26, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

30. (original) A system according to Claim 26, the network server being further operable to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

31. (currently amended) Computer code storable on a computer-readable medium and executable on a network server, said code comprising:

code for receiving orders for multiple goods from a plurality of customers;

code for determining, for each of the multiple goods, whether the good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the ordering customer, and [[for]] treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, ear-marking that good for the ordering customer, and

(ii) fulfilling the ordering customer's order by, in a case where the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, causing the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point in a single shipping order in combination with goods ordered by those from among the plurality of customers who are geographically close to respective local pick-up points.

32. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, wherein the network is the Internet.

33. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, wherein a customer or customer's agent retrieves a collection of goods from the local pick-up point.

34. (original) Computer code according to Claim 31, further comprising code to allow the customer to select from among options relating to the pick-up point customized on the basis of the type of items ordered, and/or the pick-up capability of the customer.

35. (currently amended) A method for delivering goods ordered by a plurality of customers, comprising the steps of:

a plurality of customers placing orders for goods from a vendor, at least one customer order being for multiple goods;

for each of the multiple goods in the at least one customer order, the vendor server determining whether the good is currently available at a local pick-up point geographically close to the ordering customer, and ~~[[for]]~~ treating each such good separately depending on whether the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, as follows:

(i) in a case where the good is currently available at the local pick-up point, the vendor server ear-marking that good for the ordering customer, and

(ii) in a case where the good is not currently available at the local pick-up point, the vendor server fulfilling the order of the ordering customer by causing the good to be shipped to the local pick-up point in a single shipping order in combination with goods ordered by others from among the plurality of customers who are also geographically close to the local pick-up point.